

Breast feeding best for childhood illnesses

20 September 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Study conducted by US researchers highlighted that breast feeding may offer long-lasting protection to infants. A research that followed thousands of 6-year-old children from birth, indicated that those who were breast-fed as babies were far less likely to have an ear, sinus or throat infections later in childhood.

Dr Ruowei Li, an epidemiologist at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, who led the study, said, "Breast feeding seems to be the best prescription for preventing infections. The study provides evidence that health benefits of breast feeding go beyond infancy."

The research conducted on 1,281 mothers, compared their kids based on whether and how long they were breastfed. The team found that about 15 percent of children who were breastfed had sinus infections compared to the 22 percent of non-breastfed kids.

Dr Li said that according to the research, the longer the children were breastfed, the lower the rate at which they contracted infections. She emphasized that certain factors in the breast milk boosted the child's immune system, thus protecting it from

various infections.

Dr Li further said that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding until at least 12 months old supplemented with nutrient-rich foods.